

Present: Chair Joseph Cardello, Ed Magill, Dr. Lucien Benoit, Bruce Santa Anna, John Flaherty, John Czyzewicz. Not present: John O'Donnell. Also present: Town Planner Michael Phillips, Assistant Town Solicitor Bob Rossi

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

I. Discussion on Growth Management and Impact Fees

Sam Shamoon & Town Planner

Mr. Phillips provided the Board with some background on the town's growth management plan. In 2001, a growth management plan and impact fees was recommended to the Town Council. That plan never went to Phase II, which would have included implementation of an actual fee schedule. The Planning Board has recommended revisiting impact fees.

Mr. Phillips introduced Sam Shamoon to the Board. Mr. Shamoon has been working with Mr. Phillips as a consultant to prepare a growth plan, ordinance, and impact fees. Mr. Shamoon reviewed the plan with the Board in order to come up with suggestions and recommendations to present to the Town Council in the future.

Mr. Shamoon explained to the Board that a growth management plan is a tool that the town can use to control growth. While growth can

be good for the town, it can also be costly. New residences result in increase in services--most notably in education, but also in the fire and police departments, public works, and more. A growth management plan provides various mechanisms to regulate growth. The growth management plan that Mr. Shamoon presented includes documentation of the level of growth in town and projection of future growth. Based on the projection of future growth, the growth management plan proposes a building cap of 47 residences per year. The cap would not affect non-residential, affordable housing, or building of additions. At present, there are far fewer than 47 building permits per year, so the cap could be held for the future, or adopted now as a ceiling to cap future growth. The Chair stated that he favors adopting the cap now. The plan would call for the Town Council to adopt both the report and the ordinance. The ordinance will include a formula so that the number can be adjusted without rewriting the ordinance. The ordinance will also provide for exemptions and priorities (order of permits allowed), and would be appealable to the Zoning Board. Under state regulations, low and moderate-income housing would not be included under the cap, unless the total percentage of affordable housing in town reaches 10%. Mr. Shamoon suggested that once the 10% is achieved, affordable housing could be put in the cap, but perhaps it should be made a first priority when issuing building permits.

Regarding the building cap, the Chair stated that he thinks it should be stated clearly within the report whether the number refers to the

calendar year or the fiscal year. For buildings, such as mill projects, the cap should include the number of units, not the number of permits issued. For example, if a building has 10 units, that should count as 10 out of the 47 permits allowed for the year. Mr. Cardello also suggested adding something to the ordinance that limits the number of permits per builder or development, so that the same builder can't apply for building permits under many different names.

Town Council member Paul Zwolenski requested copies of the report.

Town resident Caroly Shumway addressed the Board speaking for the Valley Alliance. She suggested using a different ratio of children per dwelling unit to project numbers of school age children. Using the numbers she suggested would result in a cap of 36 building permits per year. The Chair informed Ms. Shumway that the growth management plan will be going before the Town Council for a public hearing and asked her to present her suggestions at that meeting. Mr. Shamoon stated that the numbers he used in developing the building cap were based on town data, not state or national data.

Mr. Shamoon explained impact fees to the Board. There is a state law that governs how impact fees should be applied in Rhode Island. The impact fees are based on how growth affects capital improvements and infrastructure in the town. Impact fees would include school

buildings, public works, library, town hall, police, etc. Mr. Shamoon stated that impact fees are based on a formula, and the Town Council would need to adopt the report and ordinance. However, the numbers can be amended under the formula, if necessary. Mr. Shamoon reiterated that impact fees are not meant to stop growth, but to manage growth and minimize the impact to existing residents.

The Board agreed to continue to study the draft growth management plan and impact fees. Mr. Shamoon will attend another Planning Board meeting within the next month to answer further questions or concerns.

II. Capital Budget Review

Mr. Phillips presented the Board with the town's capital budget requests. Each year the Planning Board reviews the town's budget and makes recommendations to the Budget Committee and the Town Council. The budget is presented as a 6-year plan, with a summary of Year 1 requests. Mr. Phillips told the Board they should be looking at developments coming in future years and project capital needs on these developments. Mr. Phillips made specific recommendations on the budget requests before presenting them to the Board. Mr. Phillips stated that the Department of Public Works needs to develop a road maintenance plan.

The School Department, represented by School Committee Chair

Robert Lafleur, Superintendent of Schools Stephen Lindberg, Facilities Director Bob Desrochers, and Technology Director Eric Butash, presented their capital budget to the Board. They reviewed each line of the budget with the Board. Mr. Lindberg pointed out that some requests have been taken out, notably most of the improvement requests for Halliwell School. Because the School Department feels that the school needs to be replaced, they would rather hold an emergency fund of \$50,000 for Halliwell, than to make improvements on a school that may soon be torn down. The main technology requests were a new phone system that would connect the schools with each other and tie into the town-wide system and a mobile computer lab. Mr. Desrochers identified tree removal at Halliwell School, a new truck with plow, and a new lawn tractor as specific needs, among the other requests he presented. Mr. Lindberg also suggested that the town start charging community groups for the use of the schools.

The Board also reviewed the requests of the Highway Department, Fire Department, Parks & Recreation, Police Department, and the Library. A highway study was suggested to assess needed improvements to roads. The Parks & Recreation Dept. requested a new lawn tractor. Mr. Phillips also mentioned that Pacheco Park will be expanded, funded in part by a state-match grant. The expansion will include a new baseball field and additional parking. The Police Department requested 3 new cruisers but can make do with 2,

window replacement in the Annex, and a new van for the animal control officer. The Library requested sidewalk repair. The town has also requested \$9,300 for a Reverse 911 system.

The Board will continue its review of the capital budget at the next meeting in March.

IV. Planning Board Issues & Concerns

Mr. Rossi informed the Board that under the Open Meetings Act, a general item, such as “Planning Board Issues & Concerns,” is not appropriate to place on the agenda, unless specific concerns to be addressed are listed under the heading. The act does allow for members of the public to bring up items not on the agenda, but such cases, the Board should listen and not respond, and should not vote on the issue. If necessary, the Board may add an issue or concern to the meeting by voting to place it on the agenda.

At 10:00 PM, Mr. Santa Anna made a motion to extend the meeting until 10:05 PM. The Chair seconded the motion. Dr. Benoit voted NO, and since a unanimous vote is required, the meeting was not extended. Mr. Magill made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Benoit, with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Pugliese, Planning Board Secretary